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From Day to Day
Grace Goodman Mauran



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From Day To Day
Essays on Things
Ordinary



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Ordinary

by

Grace Goodman Mauran



Ralph Fletcher Seymour
Publisher Chicago

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*To the Memory of my Sister
Daisy Goodman Baldwin*

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Introduction

THE writing of daily themes is one of the requirements in the courses in English compositions in universities, and, I believe, in high schools and colleges. Within the compass of a page, or a paragraph or two, the student is requested to express views on any subject that may enter his or her head. After dropping these "dailies" into a theme box, or handing them in to the instructor, these budding authors await, with more or less trepidation, the reading aloud in class of the best, or the worst of these bits of composition, and the verdicts of fellow-students and teacher.

At the termination of the course many of these theme-writers abandon this form of composition with glad alacrity, others carry it into the broader fields of journalism, while still another class, though not actually continuing the habit of composing "dailies," go on looking at life from the theme point of view.

Particularly is this true of a housekeeper, with leanings toward literature, who often finds relief for her spirits in looking upon her various duties and activities from the old

theme standpoint. The face of the grocer's boy, the hanging of her curtains, the dusting of her books, the putting up of fruit, indeed all of the small interests and intimacies of home life come to be regarded as legitimate subjects for themes, and she may either allow these "dailies" to evaporate in the thin domestic air, or she may continue the practice of putting them into written words, and of dropping them into a drawer which to her fancy becomes a theme box.

The following collection of "dailies" represent such an accumulation. Whether they may serve as a warning to universities, or merely become a further reproach to the "house-bound" woman depends upon the verdict of that larger class-room, the public.

Taking Inventory

 T'S too bad to leave you alone on New Year's day," remarks the husband of the housekeeper, as he reaches for his umbrella in the hall, "and on such a beastly day, too, but you know I must be at the office, for it's the day for taking inventory."

"Yes," she answered, "it's the day for taking inventory," and as the figure of the Proprietor disappears in the fog and rain, and the housekeeper returns to her seat by the open fire, she adds to herself, "and why shouldn't a housekeeper take inventory on this day, not an inventory of her material possessions, but of her intellectual and spiritual assets." Yet not being quite clear as to what, in commercial terms, is the exact meaning of the word 'inventory,' the dictionary is brought into requisition. "An itemized list of goods with an estimated value of their worth;" why, yes, such a definition lends itself very readily to the higher purposes, but what, in spiritual terms, is a housekeeper's 'itemized list of goods?'

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The fire begins to blaze and to throw a bright light on the work-basket on the floor at one side of it, and on a chair upon which lie two half-open books on the other side. Why, here are some of the items of a housekeeper's inventory: here is the work-basket that is a symbol of domesticity, books that offer an escape from too much domesticity, and the fire that brings the two together in a beautiful union.

And as she mused over these symbolic 'items' and gazed at the increasing fog outside it seemed to her that a whole company of ghostly housekeepers appeared before her to demand recognition for their past services. They said that in their day a good housekeeper had no time for these musings by the fire, this nonsense of 'taking inventory'; she was too busy with her daily occupations, her preservings and cannings, her quiltings and soap-makings to find time for such frivolities. The old housekeeper, they assured her, used to work from sun to sun, and to be always ready for any kind of personal sacrifice, or renunciation, feeling fully repaid if only her family grew and prospered.

Presenting each member of this ghostly assembly with a spiritual laurel wreath this

Taking Inventory

housekeeper banished them, and reached for one of the half-open books on the chair. It was a volume of the essays of Sainte Beuve, and was open at that part of the chapter on Joubert in which is analyzed the great Frenchman's feeling for the celebrated Madame De Beaumont. In writing to his beloved friend Joubert says: "to live is to think and be conscious of one's soul; all the rest, drinking, eating, etc., although I do not think lightly of them, are merely aids to life, means of carrying it on."

This Alice-by-the-fire recalled her phantom companions long enough to assure them that their trouble had been that they did not think enough, and thus possess their souls, and that they had given too much time to the material aids to life. The wise housekeeper of today, she assured them, having known the luxury of possession, longs for the luxury of non-possession, having experienced the weariness of being served she would know the delights of serving, not of serving in a material way, but in a spiritual and intellectual sense.

But the ghostly company had vanished, this time of their own accord, and the house-keeper reached for the other volume on the chair. This was Montaigne's essays and a

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small handkerchief served as a bookmark in the chapter entitled "That to Philosophize is to know How to Die." There was a pencil mark after these lines: "I would always have a man to be doing and as much as in him lies to extend and spin out the offices of life—and then let death come and find me planting my cabbages."

Well, truly this is quite contrary advice to that offered by the other famous Frenchman, and yet both of these statements bring grist to the housekeeper's mill. For she knows how to mix together two seemingly unreconcilable elements, and to produce a harmony out of apparently antagonistic statements. So she says to herself, 'why of course this is a housekeeper's imperative duty; to think, no matter how small her thoughts may be—and to possess her soul. And naturally she should be up and doing, no matter how trivial her doings may be and thus extend and spin out the offices of life—and then let death come and find her planting her cabbages, or thinking her small thoughts and performing her trivial offices.'

And so in a vague sort of way this dreaming housekeeper felt that she too had been "taking inventory."

Stagnant Ponds

OD forbid," wrote Keats to Fanny Brawne, at a moment during that tragic courtship when there seemed to be a promise of a union, and a life spent together, "that we should ever settle anywhere, become a stagnant pond." It is this fear of being what is called "settled in life" which has unsettled so many artistic natures, and caused them to rebel against the domestic yoke. Stevenson voiced it in his protest against a life of simple ease and domestic routine, and we know that the author was true to his conviction and chose to "sit loosely in the saddle of life." Yet in his poems Keats prescribes, as an ideal pleasure, the sitting by the ingle of a winter's night, content to allow the fancy to do the roaming, and Stevenson's feeling about death is expressed in purely domestic terms: "Home is the sailor, home from the sea, and the hunter is home from the hill."

Yet when I read these lines of Keats to his adored Fanny, I said to myself: 'Yes, this is what we all become, we who stick to

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the fireside, who dread changes, and shrink from new surroundings; we become stagnant; both the shallows and the deeps of our natures reveal muddiness and frequently a little unpleasant slime arises to the top.'

And then, recalling the manner in which many of my favorite authors had lived, it seemed to me that each was associated with some fixed place. There was Lamb who by his own confession died every time he moved, and who loved so intensely the "sweet charities of home," and Wordsworth who was not one to season his life with much personal talk, but who loved to sit without emotion, hope, or aim in the loved presence of his cottage fire, and William Morris whose creative impulses seemed to have been strengthened by his domestic life. George Meredith would not be George Meredith without his Box Hill, and as for our own New England immortals each one seems to have had his own "undisputed dwelling place."

And who has written so feelingly about the wistful yearnings towards home as Pater whose "Child in the House" we all recognize as ourselves, holding fast some poignant memory of a cherished home: "the little white room with the window

Stagnant Ponds

across which the heavy blossoms could beat so peevishly in the wind, with just that particular catch or throb, such a sense of teasing in it on gusty mornings—.” And he says again in this wonderful analysis of a child’s mind, that “out of so many possible conditions, just this for you and that for me brings ever the unmistakable realization of the delightful *chez soi*.”

And so fortified with these illustrious examples of home-lovers one is inclined to believe that after all it is the rolling stone that is more to be dreaded than the stagnant pond, for the former brings greater distress both to the stone and its associates. And although some people may be inclined to regard the housekeeper as a type of undesirably quiet waters she knows of secret springs that relieve the seeming stagnation. And had Fanny Brawne possessed the true domestic instinct her answer to the poet would have been: “God forbid that we should ever not settle.”

Optical Allusions

CAN you see the fine print at the top now?" questioned the optician in stereotyped accents as he put another bit of glass to my eye and directed my attention to a series of paragraphs printed on a large piece of pasteboard. I answered with conscious pride that I could read even the finest print with perfect ease, yet my brain, if not my eyes, was confused by the rapid change of glasses and I was not quite sure whether the brig mentioned in the first line had sailed on the sixth or the eighth of August.

Yet it was really very important, from a physical, if not from a historical standpoint that I should know the exact date of the sailing, but I said to myself that no doubt I was as clear about the matter as most of the victims condemned to this optical test. There were many of these victims seated before showcases containing glasses suited to every kind of normal or abnormal vision, and as I awaited the return of my optician who had dived into some mysterious recess, in search, I feared, of a still more difficult

From Day to Day

brig, I watched these seekers after a clearer vision.

Over near the door sat a man whom I at once recognized as a popular society beau of my party days. He was noted then for his polished manner and correct dressing, but now he was addressing the optician in the querulous tones of an old man, and his clothes were shabby almost to the point of seediness. Seemingly his one object in life was to get those somewhat reddened eyes adjusted to the proper glasses, though from time to time he stole a glance at a showily dressed woman next to him who seemed to be waiting for some one. I followed his glance, and said to myself that for a place to meet old acquaintance and to arouse happy memories there is no place like an optician's. For years ago, I had a speaking acquaintance with this woman, but now we did not know each other even "by sight." She had been something of a beauty in her day, the soulful-eyed type, and I wondered how she reconciled herself to the hiding of the soulfulness behind glasses, and how she would get on with that ancient brig that sailed in August. "What is it to grow old?" I questioned, quoting Matthew Arnold under my breath.

Optical Allusions

Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
—Yes, but not this alone.

No, not this alone, I thought, though I knew that Arnold and I parted company here, for, whereas he goes on to mention even worse things than the loss of beauty's wreath and the lustre of the eye that comes with age, I was discovering something more interesting than declining beauty in the faded countenances of my ancient beau and belle.

A troop of school children came in to have their eyes adjusted to glasses and though they seemed to regard the operation with quiet matter-of-factness it seemed to me that they were more pathetic figures than my old friends. Here was the lustre of the eye and a few flowers from beauty's wreath, but I turned from them to gaze at the dimmed eyes of the beau and belle.

And in spite of his fussiness and seediness there was something in those reddened eyes that told of battles fought and won, and yellow as were the cheeks of the belle the soulfulness was still in her eyes, nay it was intensified; she had dreamed dreams and had visions. And I said to myself, what

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matters it after all whether the ancient brig sailed on the sixth or the eighth, the important fact is that ancient brigs can sail, and that they are sometimes more reliable than the younger craft.

Companionship

 'M thinking of spending the winter in Carolina,' remarks an acquaintance, 'one of my friends who lives there has written, begging for a long visit, and I have accepted her invitation.'

I marvel over the fact that there is a woman in Carolina pining for companionship and another in Chicago who has the courage to face such a relationship. I wonder to myself how these two women will get on together, what they will do with their mornings, and how they will find conversation to spread over the evening hours. 'You see, she doesn't treat me as a visitor.' adds my acquaintance, 'but simply allows me to do as I please while she does as she pleases.' How delightful, yet I ask myself whether what pleases one does not sometimes displease the other, and whether there are not times when one of them is tempted to ask the other to do something she is not pleased to do, thus putting an end to independence, and straining friendship to the breaking point.

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In fancy I seem to see one of these friends seated alone in her room at night and thus soliloquizing: "What an unpleasant way Jane has of looking for the seamy side of people's characters, and I do wish she would get over that irritating habit of telling the same thing over and over." Yet, of course, it is quite possible that this woman has the knack of seizing the garment of character from Jane's hands before it has been turned, and of nipping in the bud the twice told tale. There are women like this, and it is well that they exist for too many of us sympathize with the doctor in one of Dostoevsky's novels who admitted with bitterness that the more he loved humanity in general the less he loved man in particular. "I have often come to making enthusiastic schemes for the service of humanity," he says, "and perhaps I might actually have faced crucifixion if it had been suddenly necessary; and yet I am incapable of living in the same room with any one for two days together, as I know by experience. As soon as any one is near me, his personality disturbs my self-complacency and restricts my freedom. In twenty-four hours I begin to hate the best of men: one because he's too long over his dinner; another

Companionship

because he has a cold and keeps on blowing his nose. I become hostile to people the moment they come too close to me—."

Of course this gentleman's feelings towards man was pathological, as are most of the emotions expressed by the characters created by the great Russian, but such feelings often find a response in the breast of a housekeeper who by virtue of her solitude grows supersensitive and over fastidious. Dwelling so much alone, she comes to have some of the same feeling about her fellow creatures as Dostoevsky's doctor expressed, or she writes to Jane and begs for a prolonged visit.

Yet the hermit housekeeper has been known to discover a piquant charm in her bits of intercourse with the tradespeople who come to her door, some of whom offer observations that are like their wares; neatly put up in packages and ready for use, while those irregular ringers of door bells, the photographer who promises beauty, the seller of matches just out of the hospital, and the lady of fallen fortunes and evil toilet preparations frequently bring glimpses of another, and less stereotyped world that are a stimulus to a fireside spirit.

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'She's a sociable soul,' we sometimes say of the woman who would always have some one with her and who hardly ventures on a trip to town without a companion, but one questions whether the most sociable of all souls are not those who are content to be the friend of their friend's thought, who hold imaginary conversations with prized companions, and keep close to them only in spirit. In the words of the poet:

When each the other shall avoid,
Shall each by each be most enjoyed."

Curtains

TSOMETIMES think that a house-keeper is known by her hangings, and that it is quite possible to determine her character and temperament by the self revealing curtains that are hung in her windows. The geologist, or botanist traveling through an unfamiliar country discovers an interest in the landscape unknown to the mere pleasure seeking traveler; to them the earth and flowers have a special significance, and a particular message. Just so with the housekeeper whose promenades through the streets are touched with a kind of piquancy and interest because of her knowledge of the psychology of window draperies. There is a curtain stiff, elaborate lace curtain that always suggests rigidity and conventionality, and you say to yourself: "Behind these reside those bestial goddesses of comfort and respectability that Stevenson so despised, and then you go on to some soft, graceful unobtrusive draperies that call up visions of artistic souls within, and make you want to steal by some evening when the lights

From Day to Day

are lit and confirm your bit of window psychology.

Of course, sometimes you are mistaken; very agreeable people have been known to hide behind very ugly draperies, and souls without artistic impulses are found back of the soft graceful hangings. But as a rule it may be said that a housekeeper stands, or rather hangs revealed in her windows, and it is her knowledge of this fact that sometimes compels her to discard a bit of drapery long before it is worn out, but which is no longer true to her present standard of taste. And new curtains sometimes serve to gratify her love of change, while freshly laundered ones seem to impart a purity to her spirit that no one but a housekeeper can understand.

The curtain has been an important feature in literature. Heroines have been concealed behind them, secrets have been revealed through their means, and humiliation has been glad to use them as a screen. "You raise that curtain, my lord," exclaimed the irate brother of a neglected wife, in Meredith's 'Amazing Marriage' to the repentant husband who was vainly seeing a cause for reconciliation in his

Curtains

paternity, "and all three realized that the curtain would not bear shaking."

"The silken, sad uncertain rustle of each purple curtain" struck terror to the lover of Lenore in Poe's Raven, while in Dostoevsky's 'Poor Folk' it is made to serve as a medium of communication between the aged hero and his youthful love across the way.

And who can forget that memorable scene in 'Persuasion' where Lady Russel and the heroine, Anne Elliot, are taking a drive and have just passed by the estranged, but still adored lover of Anne. Lady Russel turns her head to look, and Anne, believing that it is her lover at whom her friend gazes, is all of a tremble. "You will wonder," said the older lady, "what has been fixing my eye so long; but I was looking after some window-curtains which Lady Alicia and Mrs. Frankland were telling me of last night. They described the drawing-room window-curtains of one of the houses on this side of the street and this part of the town as being the handsomest hung of any in Bath—." After a housekeeper has arrived at a certain stage in her career it is window curtains rather than discarded

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**lovers that most attract her, and that most
repay her interest.**

The Dozen Napkins



NE'S friends sometimes seem most interesting by virtue of the contrary traits in their natures, and because they are so delightfully ill-suited to their present way of living. There's Phebe for instance, an urban spirit in a suburban setting, one who despises domestic ways but is frequently caught in the most domestic of poses. It was always a comfort, she admitted, to know that there was a dozen napkins in her basket awaiting hemming. Not that she loved to sew, Heaven forbid! One of the most irritating of spectacles was a company of women with work-bags, forming what is called a "thimble party." "A thimbleful of ideas," she would say to herself, with scorn, "their spools are wound with the threads of gossip, and their needles are mere points of personal criticism."

And yet such was the contrariness of her nature, and never were there so many conflicting traits gathered into one woman's soul that she sometimes invited the companionship of her own thimble and thread

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and needle. And at such times, I fancy, that she proudly thought that no thimble could hold the ideas teeming in her ample brain, that her spools were wound with threads of colors not to be found in other lives, and that all of her needles had golden eyes.

At any rate I know that she seldom failed to attend a January linen sale and procure at least one dozen napkins for hemming. There was something about the act of turning a hem, and of stitching it in a fixed place that brought peace to her mind, and the sight of the dozen napkins awaiting her impatient fingers calmed her nerves.

And she was in sore need of peace and calm though her outward lot was one that many women would have envied. But she was a woman of undeveloped talents who longed for a career, for the artist's life of freedom, and instead, she was chained to the stake of domesticity and compelled to satisfy her craving for expression in the management of the home routine, the Monday washings, Wednesday cleanings, and Saturday bakings. If she so much as sat down by the fire for a moment's communion with her soul the cook would put her head in the room and demand to know

The Dozen Napkins

whether she wanted the potatoes fried or mashed.

"Oh, mash them," she would say irritably and her soul seemed to have joined the potatoes for she could dream no more. And then she would seize one of the napkins and the mere mechanical act of hemming would bring acceptance of the narrow domestic life that had goaded her.

And adventures, too, came with the hemming, for one Thursday when the cook was out and she sat alone on the porch, that is alone save for the presence of the napkin, the thimble, thread and needle, a woman from across the track came, bringing one of the fruits of her own hours of silent work. It was a bit of fine edging that she had crocheted herself and that would look well on the underwear of a fine lady. She was trying to help her husband pay for their home, she said, and there would be no happier woman in this world when once she was assured that the house was theirs, and that a roof was secured for their seven children. It was the oldest of stories, but somehow it stirred the emotions of the discontented sewer who went back to her napkin with humility in her heart.

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And while the Ninth napkin was under the needle, and on another Thursday afternoon came an artist to the door to ask the way to the house of a friend. They fell into conversation, and he assured her that she was an enviable woman to live in the midst of such paintable scenes, and that if in the words of the poet, there were dreams to sell and the crier rang the bell, he would answer as did this poet: "a cottage lone and still with bowers nigh," such as this was. At first his words aroused the old rebellion, and she was ready to tear the ninth napkin to bits, but she reflected upon the words of the artist, after he was gone, and wondered if she had not been blind to the beauty about her and dead to the opportunities of her own life.

And when she had finished the dozen napkins a sense of satisfaction in something achieved, in a duty accomplished, filled her soul. She had added something to the completed things of this world and the most fastidious housekeeper was welcome to examine her work. "I've finished the whole dozen," she proudly remarked to the cook as she carefully placed the little pile of napkins in a drawer.

The Dozen Napkins

"It's a good thing," replied the cook,
"you needed them."

And remembering the thimbleful of wise
thoughts that they had brought her, she
answered meekly, "yes, I needed them."

Memories of Maids

WILL the hereafter of a housekeeper be visited, I wonder, by an army of discharged house-maids with whom she has lived for a time in proud isolation, and from whom she too often parted in vexation of spirit? Will this ghostly company demand retribution for what they considered unfair discharges, and will they be permitted to speak their minds in a way not countenanced in well-regulated earthly habitations?

When I recall these maids who for brief periods dwelt so near to me, as far as bodily presence was concerned, I feel that it is true, as Thoreau says, that no exertion of the legs will bring you near to people, and that what Lamb has called the Great God Propinquity failed in too many of my own cases to bring about the desired consequences.

Alas! I seem to recall these flitting figures by their faults rather than by their virtues, and I fancy that most of them preserve the same unfortunate attitude towards myself. Hardly one do I

From Day to Day

recall whose departure was not a signal for rejoicing, and I particularly remember a fleshy Flemish blonde with a passion for wearing green feathers who filled my soul with positive bliss when she was at last persuaded that a separation would be for our mutual good, and I saw the last of the green feathers disappear around the corner.

It takes but little effort to cause this dismal army to flash upon the inward eye. There was Leona, that curious creature who could never be brought to sleep in a bed, and Ida who was with great difficulty persuaded to leave hers. I recall with anguish Hester's habit of humming, and Irma's penchant for Jap rose perfume. And then there was a period when the Jap rose would have been welcome to mitigate the odor of carbolic that Cora had always with her, and with which she warded off any possible contagion. And there was Tilda who never went out without leaving doubts as to whether she would ever return, and Sophie who cared not to go out at all, but spent her holidays in her room doing fancy work with a zest never given to the plainer tasks, and eating loaf sugar with a like ardor.

And I recall Christina who was forever holding up a former mistress as a person for

Memories of Maids

me to imitate, and Elberta whose cod-fish balls were of a quality that made us willing to endure an evil temper in their maker. Hetty had what I considered a commendable habit of breaking cut glass, but the way in which she made up for these accidents by the purchase of substitutes in imitation was not so praiseworthy. And it was Hetty, I think, or was it Lena, who never dusted the bust of Emerson, in our library, without pausing to exclaim over the wonderful likeness between the Concord sage and her Swedish uncle?

If marriage is a lottery, domestic service is still more of a one, both for mistress and maid. "Hulda is an honest girl, has lived in my home eleven months and has given perfect satisfaction during that time," reads the reference of Mrs. Black, but who knows what Mrs. Black's standard of excellence is, or what constitutes her notion of satisfaction. And, of course, poor Hulda will find that Mrs. White's manner of housekeeping differs greatly from Mrs. Black's, and she may grow discouraged in an effort to adjust herself to a shifting standard of excellence.

Yes, the maid-of-all work seems to be part of a vanished domestic regime, and I fancy that the hereafter of the housekeeper

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of the future will not be visited by a ghostly army of discharged helpers, or by any misgivings as to fairness of her treatment of these lost presences. But when my domestic accusers arise before me in some future state and demand to know whether, after all, I wasn't unjust and too exacting, whether they hadn't a right to live their own lives and have their own beaux—didn't I live my life and have my own beaux? I will hang my head and, as a punishment, say to each one: "Yes, I was wrong and you were right, and won't you please come back to me?"

Spring Within Doors



THOUGHTFUL housekeeper, one who realizes that a home should not only reflect the spirit of its inmates, but be, besides, in harmony with the season of the year, is unwilling that spring should be wholly an out-of-door affair, and that while nature is busily stirring without, all is torpid and stagnant within. She desires an indoor equivalent for this activity in the green world, and although the sap in the wood of her furniture is successfully glued against "budding at the prime" she knows of subtle ways of imparting a spring-like freshness to her possessions.

Of course, furnishings cannot be renewed as can the flowers, more's the pity, and seedy draperies and dead ornaments do not fall to the ground as do withered blossoms and dead leaves, more's the pity for that too, but there are secret methods of imparting bloom to old possessions, and those seemingly prosaic agencies, soap and water, have really magical powers.

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Yet this indoor awakening is not wholly an affair of soap and water, nor can it be defined by that commonplace term, ‘house-cleaning;’ it would be more correct to call it a domestic renaissance, for it answers Peter’s interpretation of the word ‘renaissance,’ as “a more liberal and comely way of conceiving life.” This new conception arises in the brain of a housekeeper after she has made a survey of her belongings, with an eye to possible eliminations and readjustments, and she feels that by means of certain changes and alterations it is within her power to

—bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather.”

And so a sensitive guest who visits a home thus treated will not have his, or her nerves painfully jarred by a sudden transition from dandelions to plush draperies, or be reduced to an unpleasant effort to reconcile the lilacs without to the art leathers within. Not that this wise house-keeper would have no distinction between indoors and outdoors, no shut-in coziness and shut-out spring frostiness, but she desires that there should be some kind of unity and harmony between the forces without and those within, and it is her

Spring Within Doors

ambition to make it possible for the inmates of her home to be conscious of this unity and harmony.

And it is curious what a natural affinity there sometimes seems to exist between impersonal outofdoorness and personal indooriness, and how closed-in possessions will reflect the meteorological conditions without. Books, particularly, have a way of putting out fresh green sprouts in the springtime, and of revealing other indications of the fact that the people imprisoned within their pages are about to enjoy a happy release. On certain stormy days gentle-folks from Jane Austen's pages descend from their shelves and demand recognition, and again when a mild spring rain is falling such stormy characters as the mad lovers in 'Wuthering Heights,' or some of Dostoevsky's hysterical heroes come forth to answer one's need for an indoor counteracting violence.

And on the days when the weather without is so wild as to bring about that 'tumultuous privacy' of which the poets have written, not only the books but all the indoor possessions seem to reveal that "subtlety of operation" that places them among the things of the imagination. And

From Day to Day

it is the ability to perceive these subtleties, and to comprehend such phases of domestic psychology that gives to the sensitive housekeeper her keenest joys, and permit her to work, in harmony, as it were, with nature.

Ghostly Gowns

THIS afternoon Patricia and I strolled down Michigan Boulevard together, and at the end of a two-mile walk we agreed that rarely had we enjoyed a more interesting experience. For we had not only delved into the delights and adventures of our pasts, but we had, besides, gained some important data on the psychology of dress.

Psychology is Patricia's specialty; she teaches it in a girl's school, but when not so engaged, when she turns her back on the sciences, and her face to the superficialities I know of no one who can be more charmingly gay and flippant than my friend, Patricia. And today the superficialities that she faced were some beautiful windowed gowns and hats about which she chatted with the ardor of a school girl.

"Would you believe it," she said, as we stood before a milliner's window, "my spring hat is just a mass of yellow roses, and yet when I bought it I was terribly in the dumps, for we had just received news that brother Roy had been slightly wounded

From Day to Day

in action. Can you fancy buying yellow roses under such conditions?"

"Yes," I answered, "it is one of woman's compensations, to put roses on her head when she cannot have them in her heart. Hats have always acted as a kind of drug for us."

"Ah, there's a dress that would just suit you," declared Patricia, directing my attention to a plain stone-gray poplin that adorned the mature figure of a waxen lady in our next shop window, but my eyes were fixed upon quite another sort of costume; a pale blue bodice above a gauzy white skirt. I was standing in my old bed-room at home arrayed in this same gown, and while patient maternal fingers were fumbling with the laces of this bodice I was saying in irritated tones: "Hurry, hurry, we shall be too late for the grand march, and the smilax on my gown is wilted already—."

"Do you suppose I could wear that shade of green?" demanded the voice of Patricia, and I saw that she was gazing in rapture upon a somewhat fussy gown of gray-green chiffon. "Is it too youthful, do you think?" Secretly, I thought this dress much too youthful for Patricia, but I knew that she, like myself, was choosing garments for

Ghostly Gowns

the figure of her youth, and so I replied: "It was made for you."

But just then Patricia nudged my elbow, and directed my attention to a well-dressed young man who was standing in wide-eyed admiration before a beautiful waxen blonde, arrayed in a shimmering gown of lavender tulle covered with opal beads.

"If a cat may look at a king, a dog of a man may glance at these queenly beauties," whispered Patricia, "and isn't it nice that he may be allowed to take his full of all this loveliness, and stare as long as he pleases at the beautiful blonde. He knows that her sweet, waxen smile will never relax and that she will not turn her head in haughty scorn at his impertinence."

"Perhaps he is only a commercial buyer," I suggested, but Patricia said I had no imagination, "or it is possible," I went on, "that, like us, he is visited by some vision of the past, and the lovely blonde serves only to recall a flesh and blood beauty whom he once adored."

We left the young man still gazing at his charmer, and passed on to the next window. Here a marvel of simplicity in the form of a

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white net gown belted in at the waist with a satin sash caught our fancies, and aroused again our sentimental musings.

"White is always lovely," I tritely remarked.

"Yes," answered Patricia, "it's the only color, or lack of color, that suits every occasion; we are christened in white, graduate in it, are married and buried in it. And speaking of graduation I can see myself as plainly as I see this figure in white net, standing on the platform in Room One of the old Douglas school, dressed in a fluffy white muslin and assuring a restless audience that 'fiction has existed to a greater or less extent since the earliest history we have of mankind, but it probably received its greatest impetus during the crusades when—.'"

"There's that same young man again," I interrupted.

"I suppose he has forgotten all about the Lady of the Opal Beads" whispered Patricia, "and is losing his heart, in true man-fashion, to our sweet girl graduate. I wonder if he don't wish he might own one of these waxen ladies to take about with him, like that girl in the story who dressed up a

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wire frame in a man's mackintosh and provided herself with a suitable escort."

"How foolish you are Patricia, and how foolish most of us women are when it comes to the subject of clothes."

"Wasn't it Emerson, or was it some woman friend of his who said—"

"That the consciousness of being well-dressed gave a woman a greater satisfaction than that bestowed by religion," I continued, "Gracious Patricia! you might have spared me that hackneyed quotation."

"But it's true nevertheless," declared my friend. "Men don't understand a woman's attitude towards her clothes; they think it purely a question of vanity and love of display, whereas it is her method of self expression, just as her home is. Do you remember that heroine in Hardy's 'Mayor of Casterbridge' who hesitated so long in her choice of two gowns because she knew that she would be entirely a different creature in one from what she would be in the other. We like our clothes to reflect our spirits, to be true to our innermost being."

"As if we were ever true to our innermost being, either in clothes or conversation."

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"You are getting tired," declared Patricia "let's stop in this candy shop and satisfy our innermost being with a cup of chocolate. We really have taken a longer walk than we realize."

"Yes," I replied, "we have walked back into our pasts and this is always a wearisome performance."

"But I should like to know," declared Patricia, the psychologist, "something of the past of that young man, and his present thoughts on the subject of woman's clothes."

With The Fish Course

HE connection between fried fish on our dining table and a ship that sailed in 'forty nine' around Cape Horn on its way to the California gold fields does not, at first thought, seem very close, but that is because one reckons without the host. He supplies the connection. For while serving guests at his table this host no sooner feels the touch of the fish under his knife, when straightway fancy is off for the Gold Fields, and he is saying to his guests:

"I hope you like fish as well as I do; I'm extravagantly fond of all kinds of sea food, and I come naturally by the taste, for you see my grandfather was a sea captain, and during the gold fever he commanded a vessel that sailed around Cape Horn for California, and took seven months for the voyage. The captain's son, my father, sailed with him, and he kept a diary of the events of the trip. By the way, Phyllis, where is that diary."

And Phyllis, the hostess, who has vainly been seeking the eye of the host for personal

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communication, and who has sailed around Cape Horn about a hundred times before, answers pleasantly:

"Oh, it's in the book-case, and after dinner I'll bring it out."

But the host thinks that one or two selections from this prized record would be a delightful appetizer, and a Polite Guest echoes this opinion. So instead of eating Lake Michigan white fish at a cozy little dinner party, the company at table is dragged around Cape Horn in the society of the father and grandfather of the host. Says the latter: "just listen to this bit":

January 29th. Fish, beef soup, and green peas for dinner and the steerage passengers were allowed butter and cheese for their meal, which seems to have reconciled them to their fates and satisfied their hunger, though they appear to have appetites of animals.

"How interesting," murmurs the Polite Guest, and the others gaze sadly at the pile of empty plates before the host, and sympathize with the steerage passengers.

January 30th. The steerage passengers are grumbling over burnt bean soup. Got up the stove and we shall now have things

With The Fish Course

in better shape. Hope to see canary birds off Canary Islands, and they will make us think, not of the islands, but of home.

"How touching," remarks the Polite Guest, and the other guests think how grateful they would be even for burnt soup.

'February 2nd. This is Washington's birthday, and we celebrated with a fine rainbow and a dinner of salt junk and Indian pudding.' "Will there ever be any pudding for us?" wonder the guests.

'March 11th. All busy getting ready for the great Cape Horn. Passengers now lively and a little homesick. Two months since we left Boston and we are now 6000 miles from home. Passengers are feeding the sharks.'

But at the word 'feeding' the hostess starts. "Are we never to have our fish? I'm sure it must be stone cold."

"But we haven't reached the Horn yet," says the Polite Guest, and the other guests look as if they would prefer to reach the white fish on the table.

"You see," apologizes the hostess, "these ambitious ancestors of Paul's always sit at our table whenever there is a fish course, and though they rather hinder the dinner

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I have come to the conclusion that this is a very nice way for Paul to honor the memory of our two sailors."

And the guests politely echo her conclusion, but what they said afterwards is recorded only in their own diaries.

Gardening

WASN'T it Adela Chart, the heroine of Henry James' delightful story, 'The Marriages,' and the lady famous for having made so deep an impression on Stevenson's 'elderly heart', who looked forward to an old age spent in a garden, on her knees, with her gloves and scissors and steeped in the comfort of being thought mad? Gardening is assuredly a dignified and satisfying resource for old age, but devotion to this pursuit is not to be regarded as a sign of madness, for on the contrary it seems to be one of the safest of the roads that lead to sanity.

For if anything will take the taint of sickness from the brain, and the irritating kinks from the nerves it is the digging and fussing about in a garden. "Glut your sorrow on a morning rose, or on the wealth of globed peonies," wrote Keats, who probably knew no more of the subtle delights of a garden than was to be obtained by the mere act of gazing at the rose and the peony. But when you are interested in the actual cultivation of these

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flowers, when you become a partner in their efforts to develop, and to free themselves from their enemies, then their beauty permeates still further into your being, and you may indeed glut your sorrows on their perfections.

Yet some people confess to a distaste for this noble pursuit, find no fascination in the hoe and trowel, and are bored by conversations of a flowery or seedy character. And of course it is useless for these persons to try and become gardeners, their interests lie in other directions and they should be allowed to follow the flowerless paths. For the love of gardening seems to be a matter of inheritance or temperament, you either love to dig or you don't, and those of us who love to dig are sorry for those who don't.

A garden may be as personal and individual as a home. It may be as imitative and characterless as a modern colonial drawing room, or as expressive and alluring as the most charming of living rooms. It may have its floral equivalents for mahogany furniture, rose hangings and white wood-work, or it may be as full of subtle touches, of intimate personal revelations as a library or bedroom.

Gardening

At the beginning of one's career as a gardener the temptation is to plant anything that is suggested, either by professional or amateur, and to accept all horticultural advice without question, but after a time you become conscious of a strong affection for certain flowers and of indifference to others. Perhaps those for whom you have formed a friendship grew in the gardens of your youth, or are associated with certain episodes in your life, and since there is not room in your garden for all flowers, why naturally those that you love are given the preference. And thus the garden becomes a part of you, the finer part, and you discover that to live among these, your floral affinities, is to bring joy and peace to your soul.

Of course, there is the garden egotist who is about the most tiresome egotist in the world. He talks of "my fox-gloves" and "my marigolds" in a way that makes you feel that fox-gloves and marigolds were created for him alone, and when you walk about in his garden, and listen to his horticultural chatter you are conscious of a strange aloofness from his flowers and you long to get out among the wild plants that call no man master. Naturally, one has a right to.

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feel pride in one's achievements in gardening, a pride that has been dearly won in the hours of quiet, uncelebrated digging, but the lesson of the flowers is humility, and it is not a well cultivated garden that brings forth a crop of weedy boastfulness.

If you happen to be a book-lover, as well as a gardener, you will be sure to find a quotation at the heart of every flower that blooms in your garden, and there will be, besides, sermons in the seeds, books in the climbing vines, but not good in everything. For high tragedy stalks about in the garden when the rabbits eat up the tulip bulbs, when the birds fly away with the berries and storms lay low the proud plumes of the corn. But nature has many compensations, and one gains a riper philosophy from these adversities.

But of course, it is a harrowing experience to show off one's garden to one who knows flowers only as they have bloomed in literature, and whose speech is adorned with the blossoms of rhetoric and quotation. Such a flower-lover sees not your daffodils but those which flashed upon Wordsworth's inward eye; your English daisies recall the "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower" that fell under the plow of

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Burns and your foxglove reminds him of the fact that Maeterlinck called these blossoms melancholy sky-rockets. And so he runs on, while your flowers blush unseen to his actual vision and you grow weary of the blossoms of literature.

And then there is the unintelligent lover of flowers, one who don't know a buttercup from a canterbury bell, who demands the name of all and remembers none, who has always adored flowers but who would never think of becoming intimate with them. He is not so bad as the egotist or the quoter, but what a relief when they have all winded their weary ways, and have left you alone with your garden, your gloves and scissors, steeped in the comfort, not of being thought mad, but of being regarded as a somewhat unbalanced lover of gardens and gardening.



On The Sleeping Porch

THIS sleeping out of doors makes of going to bed an eagerly anticipated nightly adventure, and of awakening a delightful dramatic experience. Insomnia is robbed of half its terrors when the stars are willing to bear one company through the wakeful hours, and it almost seems ill-mannered to turn one's back on them to seek a dull oblivion. Yet, as Hardy has somewhere pointed out, the pleasures of the imagination do not atone for wakefulness, and even though the stars teach the lesson of humility and assure one that the sleeping or waking of one porched individual matters but little to the world at large, still it matters a great deal to the individual, who goes to bed for the purpose of sleeping, and who insists upon the presence of the balmy restorer.

During the romantic years one restless sleeper fortified herself against insomnia by learning by heart the odes of Keats so that even now during the wakeful hours that are the product of the philosophic years she can still remark to the friendly orbs:

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"Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art," but before reaching the "lone splendor" she is in the midst of the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," and then jumps directly from 'Autumn' to a "drear-nighted December," assuring the trees just outside the porch that "the North cannot undo them with its sleepy whistle through them, nor frozen thawings glue them"—but it is impossible to continue along these lines and now she is announcing to the nightingale that "my heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains my sense as though of hemlock I had drunk." What is hemlock, and would it really cure this horrid wakefulness, or is there any other dull opiate that could be guaranteed to send one 'Lethe-wards?' But why should that Grecian Urn now intrude itself upon one's thoughts, bringing with it its 'maidens loath,' its 'pipes and timbrels,' its 'fair youths beneath the trees.'

The nightingale has come to the front again, and is being assured that: I am half in love with easeful death and should like to 'cease upon the midnight with no pain.' Yes, why make such a fuss about death when, at the worst, it is but a prolonged sleep, and sleep is so precious.

On The Sleeping Porch

But the nightingale has flown, the Grecian Urn with its youths and maidens have faded and she is back among the stars, again repeating: ‘Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art;’ just what did Keats mean by ‘steadfast’ and how does that line about the sleepless Eremite go? What in the world is a sleepless Eremite? Is she one? ‘Yet still steadfast, still unchangeable—why how loud those birds sing, it must be time to get up.’”

Sweet Nancies

WHAT is this little flower," questioned a famous musician who had strayed into my garden on his way to a morning rehearsal in a nearby summer garden. During the summer a flock of musicians take possession of our woods, and while strolling about one is quite as liable to be greeted by the notes of a violin as those of a vireo.

"Why, that's a sweet nancy," was my answer, "and one of the most old-fashioned of flowers; didn't they grow in the garden of your childhood?"

"I didn't have any garden in my childhood," he replied quietly, "for you see I was raised in a tenement house."

"And yet your music always suggests flowers, and birds, and the free air."

"And earthiness?" he questioned.

"No, the earthiness belongs to the days of your struggles, now your art is concerned only with the fruits and blossoms."

"But I had to dig," he went on, smiling, "harder than ever you have dug in this garden."

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"But to how much greater a purpose; you have become an interpreter of Bach, while I have produced only buttercups and sweet nancies. But do you know," I went on, "sometimes I think it would be better for your art if you were still living in the tenement house."

"Thank you," he laughed, as he slipped into a swinging seat near the nancies, brushing aside a few books and seed packages to make room for himself, "and are not artists to be permitted any of the comforts of life?"

"You make me think of a story in one of these books that I am rereading for about the seventh time, just wait till I find the place and I'll read you a bit. The story is by Henry James and is called the "Lesson of the Master," and the lesson that the master, a literary genius, teaches to the younger aspirant to fame is to the effect that the latter must dispense with such false idols as a wife and establishment. Listen to this:

'Isn't the artist a man?' questions the younger genius.

'Sometimes I really think not,' replies the Master, 'you know as well as I what he has to do; the concentration, the finish, the

Sweet Nancies

independence he must strive for, from the moment that he begins to respect his work. Ah, my young friend, his relation to women, especially in matrimony is at the mercy of this damning fact—that whereas he can in the nature of things have but one standard, they have about fifty. Fancy an artist with a plurality of standards. To do it and make it divine is the only thing he has to think about.'

"And did the pupil accept the lesson?" questioned my visitor, who was moving uneasily among the books and seed packages.

"He had to," I laughed, "because the Master married the woman he was in love with."

"That's a good story, but really these outward things make no difference to an artist, his art is independent of circumstances, or possessions, and expresses only what is locked within his own soul."

"Fiddlesticks," was my reply, "the soul would be but an empty cask were it not filled with the experiences and sufferings of its possessor. Don't you know what Rosetti has written: 'By thine own tears thy song must tears beget, O Singer! Magic mirror thou hast none except thy

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manifest heart—' and something more about the musician having no amulet save his own anguish or ardor."

"How awfully literary you are," declared the musician, "but do you know I think that the one who listens must have suffered and agonized also."

"Yes, the old saying is true that to enjoy the wealth of the Indies one must bring the wealth of the Indies."

"Well, it's pretty hard lines for us artists," declared my visitor, rising, "no comforts or companions, only anguish and ardor, but I must be off to rehearsal which is a part of my anguish; may I have a flower?"

"Oh, yes, take a bachelor's button," I slyly suggested.

"No, thank you, if you don't mind I'll have one of these sweet nancies."

Dusting Walden Pond

EVERY housekeeper, even the maid-keeping one, should occasionally dust her own possessions, if only to learn whether these are worth possessing. There is nothing like the intimate relation between duster and dustee to bring home this fact, as well as other interesting domestic data. Yet to most women dusting is merely a mindless, mechanical performance to be got through with as quickly as possible, and to be relegated to others when admissible. I recall the innumerable dustings that I gave to a small marble statuette of "Cleopatra and the Asp" before it occurred to me to question whether this lady was worth the trouble she cost.

And all the world knows how Thoreau threw away an ornament, or bit of furnishing that graced his hermitage because he could not afford the time required to dust it while the furniture of his mind remained undusted. But Thoreau could not have been much of a housekeeper, or he would have recognized the fact that the process

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may be a dual one, that it is quite possible to brush away the dust from one's mental furniture at the same time that one is removing it from the material possession. Take the case of my Cleopatra for instance: though it was long before I questioned whether the statuette was a work of genuine artistic merit, justifying careful dusting, I frequently paused while performing such an act to brush up my Shakespeare and to repeat: "I'm fire and air; my other elements I give to baser life," or: "Come thou mortal wretch with thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate, of life at once untie—"

And Walden Pond itself, or at least the photograph of this famous water, which I was wont to dust so carefully used often to inspire me to take up the famous classic, written on its borders, and to refresh memories of the inspiring utterances of the great naturalist. An actual visit to the place seemed not to bring the author so vividly before one as when standing in front of the photograph, duster in one hand and open book in the other. No, Thoreau was not so great a housekeeper as he was a naturalist, else he would have realized that to throw away a useless ornament for no

Dusting Walden Pond

better reason than because there is no time to devote to the dusting of this possession may be to deprive the mind of some precious mental stimulus.



The Bridge

T spans a ravine in a bit of woods that has the air of being remote from civilization, but which in reality is but about twenty miles from Chicago's center. It is but a crude and commonplace structure with no "architectural features" or "historical values," and it was built with no other purpose than that of providing a convenient passage across an otherwise impassable gulch.

Yet nature has insisted upon decorating this bridge, and giving it some picturesque touches in the form of a clump of lovely maples from which it emerges, and by means of the golden rod, bergamot and other wild flowers that grow at each end. Below the bridge runs a somewhat uncertain stream over which bend some graceful sumacs and shad bushes, and in the springtime the blossoms on the latter look like ladies' white veils dropped from the bridge by careless hands.

During the summer afternoons of leisure it is pleasant to lie in my hammock in the garden that overhangs this ravine and

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listen to the footsteps of wayfarers crossing the nearby bridge. There are not many of them, it would be tiresome always listening and looking, but there are enough to give charm to one's retreat, and piquancy to one's meditations. I find myself looking away from my book, from pen and ink people to the more attractive figures on the bridge, and it seems easier to weave a romance about these moving shapes than to find one in the pages of a dull novel.

For most of these footsteps seem to be charged with expectancy and hope, and are not heavy and dragging like the footsteps on a city bridge. Even the grocer's boy who has left his wagon at the other end of the bridge and is crossing with his basket to an out-of-the-way customer whistles the "Meditations from Thais" as he goes, and though he has difficulties with the air you know that its sugared sweetness has sunk into his soul while listening to the playing of a great artist at a nearby summer garden.

Friendship goes blithely across my bridge in the form of basketfuls of vegetables for gardenless neighbors, or huge bunches of bergamot and black-eyed susans for those who are unable to wander about the woods. And frequently I catch fascinating glimpses

The Bridge

of gay knitting bags hurrying across to join other knitting bags on the oposite side, or white napkins covering some dainties designed to tempt the appeties of the sick.

Lovers seldom linger on my bridge, though I have fancied that I have detected an occasional pair pausing to gaze at the sumacs and shadbushes, and seeming to take an exaggerated interest in some bird's nest in a tree below. Once a white handkerchief floated out of the hands of a small figure in rose-pink and straightway the figure beside it, in brown corduroy, disappeared only to reappear a few moments later carrying the bit of white muslin. I ventured to wonder if, after marriage, they should be crossing this bridge and she should again drop her handkerchief whether he would be as eager to recover it. But why cross a bridge before it is reached?

On another occasion I came face to face with two of the bridge-walkers who had got lost, and had strayed into my garden for information. They seemed more interested in the larkspurs and foxgloves than in the directions I gave them and they presented such happy faces that I was not in the least bit surprised when assured that they had been married but an hour. The

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wedding had occurred at the home of a mutual friend, and choosing to walk to the station alone they had been directed which road to take. But they had turned the wrong corner, crossed the wrong bridge, and now among my flowers seemed quite unconcerned whether they missed their train or not. I gave them a wedding bouquet of foxgloves and larkspurs, and returned to my hammock hoping that this was not an evil omen, and that they would not always be turning the wrong corners and crossing the wrong bridges.

But for the most part I have but little intercourse with this goodly company of bridge walkers and they for their part are ignorant of the fact that other eyes than those of the birds are watching them. Yet I count them among my most congenial friends, and am grateful to them for the whistled airs, the basketed and white nap-kined offerings, and for meditations concerning woman's humanity to woman.

Size Fourteen

 ONCE knew a woman who gloried in the fact that at an advanced age she still continued to wear the garments of juvenility, that the gowns and coats that now hid her stooping figure were of the same size as those which covered the erect frame of her girlhood. Physically, she had never grown up, and while not being conspicuously undersized or underweighted she was in reality not normally developed.

To many women this would have been a source of mortification, and they would have sought to conceal immaturity under the garments that properly belonged to age, but this woman seemed to take a genuine delight in underdevelopment, and when purchasing a gown or waist she would answer the saleswoman's query: "what size please?" with the quick and proud response: "fourteen."

Of course every purchaser of "ready-mades" knows that in these days when women never really become old women there is not so much difference between

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juvenile and senior apparel; perhaps the misses' waists are a trifle more girlish in cut, and perhaps the colors of their gowns are a bit livelier, but in general it may be said that the styles are the same.

And this wearer really gloated over even the slight difference in cut, and over the gay colors with which she arrayed her mature but immature figure. And when a gown that had caught her fancy proved to be even of greater juvenility of style than usually characterized size fourteen she rejoiced in secret over the fact, and regarded this new possession with a particular affection.

But a strange punishment overtook the vanity of this woman. As the years went on and she continued to haunt the misses section of ready-mades, and to answer "size fourteen" to the queries of sales-women her mind seemed gradually to take on a juvenile cut and her spirits to betray an unbecoming girlishness. It seemed as if she was so dominated by her clothes, and she had always set great store by what she wore, that her mind grew to adapt itself to her raiment and she became, intellectually, "size fourteen."

Size Fourteen

In plain words she dressed too youthfully, and her spirits were too lively for one of her years. People said of her that she would appear much more dignified and properly sedate if she would not insist upon decking herself out in such youthful looking clothes, and really she could not, however hard she tried, be dignified and sedate in such garments, dignity and sedateness did not go with size fourteen.

And the strange thing about it all was that she did not realize her punishment and that while her friends were deplored this prolonged juvenility she imagined that they were saying to one another: "How wonderful she is, she is the kind that never grows old, because she will always keep the joyousness of youth, the spirit of "size fourteen."

And I often question whether, after all, she was not more to be envied than pitied.

In Memoriam

THIS morning a pall seems to hang above a certain row of handsome red volumes on my unglassed shelves, and I glance sorrowfully at the picture of their author that rests on my desk. For the morning paper has brought the sad news that Henry James is dead, and for a moment I feel that one of my dearest household companions has been taken away. But only for a moment do I feel thus, for in reality I know that the great novelist is still here, to share my solitude and inspire my domestic activities, and that he will continue to "lubricate my days," to use one of his own phrases, as long as there are days to be lived through.

Personal acquaintance with an author, or visits to his home and haunts do not always tend to deepen your sense of intimacy with him, or intensify your admiration for his work, and I recall my disappointment when upon visiting Concord, and the home and grave of its sage I realized that, for me, Emerson's spirit did not hover about Sleepy Hollow, or even about the old homestead,

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but that it was shut up in my little library at home.

Yet I am glad to have heard that Cathedral-bell voice of Henry James, and to have been permitted to gaze for an hour or so at the face of one who had given me so many delicious moments. "Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, and then he smiled and pretended to peer about for the gentlemen, who of course were sadly in the minority. I am glad, too, that on this occasion when I stood in line waiting my turn to shake the hand of the great novelist he was whisked off by a zealous hostess before I had an opportunity to make the silly speech that was forming in my brain. Fancy daring to make a speech, to utter a witticism to Henry James!

Gazing this morning at the backs of these prized volumes I realize that no girl actually living in the flesh has ever seemed more real than poor, pretty Daisy Miller in her white muslin "with a hundred flounces and knots of pale-colored ribbon." Yes, Henry James knew how to dress up his heroines and make you look twice to see what they wore. As for Daisy's incorrigible little brother, Randolph, I can still hear him crunching the

In Memoriam

lump of sugar bestowed by the inquisitive hero and declaring: "Oh, blazes, it's hard."

Of course, many of Daisy's successors had but little of the flesh-and-blood quality, but they had brains and nerves and the gift of saying such clever things. Or if they could not say the clever things themselves their creator said them for them, and many of these utterances will remain as long, nay longer, than the red volumes hold together. There was the girl whose eyes looked as if they had just been sent home from the wash, and the one with the "brambles of the woodland caught in the folds of her gown and a look as if the satyrs had toyed with her tresses." There was the woman with "a loud hurrying voice like the bell of a steamboat," and the one who always "jumped into the conversation with a hand-spring." And there was the hero who had 'fallen in love, really fallen in love,' "and the fracture was of a kind that would make him permanently lame," and the wife who had washed her hands off her husband but was always "carrying the water of this ablution about with her for the inspection of her friends." But why speak of the characters in the past when they are still here alive on my shelves, and ready at a

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moment's notice to exhibit their queer-nesses.

Of course, one is not always in a mood for James, there are moments when one is ready to pass coldly by these highly evolved heroines and choose instead one of those "frail, passive, wild-rose blossom women of Hardy's who, without passion or strength or constancy, have but one power, to hold and break the hearts of men." But I always hold it as a housekeeper's test of the power of an author his ability to send her from him, to cause her to close his book and run to perform some purely mechanical domestic task simply because she cannot go on reading until she has had time to gloat over some particular bit of delicious profundity, and has worked off her excess of delight on some material object. Many and many a time has this housekeeper put down one of Henry James' stories and rushed out into the kitchen to fill the pepper bottle, or clean out the table-drawer, thinking all the time not of the pepper bottle or the drawer, but of that bit of human insight that has just been revealed.

Not all his feminine readers have found this stimulation in the great novelist's work, and some have confessed that for

In Memoriam

them he is duller than the dullest household task, and that they would rather go on filling pepper bottles and cleaning out drawers to the end of time than to be obliged to read him. But for one reader at least, Henry James is inextricably woven with domestic occupations, he has imparted color and charm to them, or to repeat again his own phrase: he has lubricated her days.



Opera Versus Sunsets



BOUT half a mile away from our suburban bower, and in a beautiful wooded spot, summer grand opera is offered to those who like to take their music informally and out-of-doorly, and to regale themselves with the perennial charms of such old time favorites as "Martha," "Suzanne," "Rigoletto," "Madame Butterfly." And at about equal distance, but in another direction nature puts on the dramatic spectacle of a sunset, to be witnessed from the auditorium of what goes under the name of the Green Bay Road.

And it our custom to ask each other: "Well, what shall it be this evening: Suzanne, or the sunset? Martha, or a ride across the Skokie marshes? Madame Butterfly, or just plain real butterflies fluttering about the roadside milkweed?" And almost always, with the vision of Martha addressing her artificial last rose, of Suzanne smoking her everlasting cigarette, of the bagged Soloist in Rigoletto, and of the warbled woes of Madame Butterfly we decide in favor of what we like to call

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Nature's Movies, and as we ride by the illuminated gates that open upon the scenes of operatic suffering we say to each other: "wouldn't you rather be here than there?"

"But I thought you were music-lovers," kind friends will protest, and meekly we explain that we are, but we like the kind of music that leaves something to our imaginations and allows us to summon before the inward eye our own ideals of Marthas and Suzannes. We declare that we are rather weary of operatic absurdities, of shouted love confessions, of proclaimed secrets and death-bed solos, and we prefer, while listening to music, to forget the elemental passions of man, and be minded only of his spiritual attributes.

"Nonsense!" say our friends, "your trouble is a lack of imagination, you are not able to discover that the artificial roses, the cigarettes, and the bagged soloists that you so despise are but symbols that assist the mind to understand and the heart to enjoy the music. You should"—but we are off for the marshes, for the music afforded by the "wailful choir of small gnats," and by the "gathering swallows twittering in the skies."

At The Death Bed of Hens

LITERATURE owes much to poultry for its inspiration and for its phraseology. Has not chanticleer crowded through innumerable immortal works, and have not such terms as ‘hen-pecked,’ ‘chicken-hearted,’ ‘hen-minded’ become part of the bed-rock of our language?

So it is quite in the nature of things that when present at the death bed of a hen—and in my time I have been the unhappy witness of the dissolution of many a worthy fowl—I should be reminded of a poem of Matthew Arnold’s entitled ‘A Wish.’ And it is with no feeling of levity or of disrespect to the memory of the great poet that on such occasions I recall this poem, but it is simply that the dying of these dumb creatures seems to be accomplished with the dignity and absence of the “ceremonious air of gloom” which Arnold hoped might characterize his own departure from the world. He wished for more than this; he would have his death-bed unvisited either

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by "some doctor full of phrase and fame," or his "brother-doctor of the soul:"

"To canvass with official breath
The future and its viewless things—
That undiscovered mystery
Which one who feels death's winnong
wings

Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!

Our funeral customs seem to have yielded less to progress than any other of our practices. Perhaps there is less of crepe than there used to be and the "ceremonious air of gloom" is somewhat less ceremonious, but we still demand blackness to express our grief and we hurry about in search of a minister to 'officiate' at the last service, and to express some paid-for sentiments on the life of one whom perhaps he never saw.

"I don't mind dying," a friend once remarked to me, "but I can't bear the thought that the Reverend Doctor Shale should preach my funeral sermon." If some sympathetic friend who had worked side by side with the lost comrade could utter, no matter how clumsily, an expression of his appreciation and his grief it would be well, though perhaps after all it does not matter, for at every funeral each friend

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present is in reality preaching the sermon, while the deeds of the dead go marching on.

The hen is spared these ceremonies and the way she withdraws to a remote spot to fight out her battle with nature, and the manner in which she gently and meekly submits to her fate seem sometimes better than human. To be sure the other hens will often manifest their contempt and disgust by spiteful peckings at a suffering sister, and we deplore their cruelty, but there have been atrocities committed in the name of civilization that make the hen seem like a humanitarian in comparison. And after all, who knows but what this gentle sufferer, at the moment of dissolution, sees into the future and its viewless things, and is vouchsafed some faint understanding of the "undiscovered mystery."

Autumn Leaves and Daffodils

WE played wall-flower last evening at a children's party, but why call ourselves flowers when in reality we were autumn leaves, swept up against a wall to form a rusty background to a host of golden daffodils, dancing and fluttering about on the ball room floor.

The dancers were not all of the daffodil type, but had other prototypes in the green world. There was a queen lily in white taffeta with a physique of royal proportions, and a face that recalled Mary Anderson in her starry days, and there was a rose in yellow gauze who was a symbol of June. A hepatica in pale pink tulle reviewed the charm of the first spring days, and a plump little buttercup in green chiffon aroused visions of midsummer. They all danced and fluttered, and the autumn leaves against the wall rustled and grew reminiscent.

"I remember when I was a little girl attending parties," said one of them, "we were not allowed to wear tulle and chiffon,

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but were grateful for dotted muslins and pink sashes." "Yes," said another, "and I can recall a time when I would have been in ecstasies over a dotted muslin and a pink sash, for I was compelled to wear a black and white check plaid every Saturday at dancing school, and when the closing party arrived, for fear I might become too vain and self-conscious if permitted a new gown I was obliged to appear in the black and white check. Never shall I forget the suffering of that evening or the awful mortification of being the only child present in an old gown. Children know how to suffer as well as to enjoy."

And then some of the autumn leaves became philosophical and questioned each other as to whether there was any delight in after life, any artistic triumph or commercial success, any gratified ambition or professional achievement that could compensate for the loss of youth, or be as keen as its simple delights. Why could we not always remain children, they sadly asked one another, and be forever nodding and dancing on ball room floors?

And then a certain red-brown leaf remarked that there were many a flinty little heart hidden under the taffeta and tulle,

Autumn Leaves and Daffodils

and that after all, were not the only joys worthy of attainment those that came after life had been refined in the crucible of pain and suffering?

And just then the lily in white taffeta lost her program. Heavens! what a calamity, and how was she to go on dancing without it. She appealed to her fourteen-year old host. Had he seen anything of a lost program? "Gee!" was his answer, "everybody's lost their program." But at last the lily's was found and the nodding and dancing went on.

And of these autumn leaves against the wall the daffodils on the floor took no heed. They were Peter Bells in their attitude towards these disciplined beings. To them an autumn leaf against the ball room wall was simply an autumn leaf, a thing that had had its day, and was now cut off from the joys of dancing and fluttering. The leaves scattered and went home to enjoy at later moments, with their inward eyes, and accompanying thrill of pleasure, this charming spectacle of beautiful childhood at its merrymaking. "And would you be a child again?" one leaf asked of another. The answer was prompt: "Oh, no, no, no!"

To My Attic

HERE have been many attic philosophers, wise men who either from necessity or choice have brought to these humble retreats a lofty kind of thinking and a theory of life that made them indifferent to their humble surroundings, or disposed to regard them with a fine scorn and fortitude. But when this suburban philosopher climbs the step-ladder stairs that lead to her attic nest she goes to seek there a philosophy that is already made and which seems to be a part of its atmosphere. Instead of ancient chests, and travel-beaten trunks filled with actual curios and mementoes and smelling of sandal wood and attar of roses this attic appears to contain quaint imaginary chests and trunks that are crowded with all sorts of odds and ends of philosophy and ethics that are the fragrant relics of dead and gone philosophers.

Of course, the material curios and mementoes are there too, driven into dark corners by a philosophy that accepts only the spiritual significance of possessions, but

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the real inhabitants of the place are the ghostly presences of bygone philosophers and the little motes of their high thinking with which they have filled the air. Even the most prosaic of worldly souls who venture to climb the steep stairs anticipating a conventional garret at the top will, before they have caught their breath, gasp out some commonplace quotation about this being indeed a little kingdom of content, and restfully remote from the madding crowd.

Yes, it is a little kingdom of content, though it is difficult to analyze this atticized feeling; sometimes I think it is due to the mere fact of its difference from the conventional city study or bed-room, and again the absence of regulation doors and windows and decorated walls are enough to account for its charm. On the days when the rain patters on the roof or the squirrels scamper over it, or when the acorns drop upon it with a loud thud one is at no loss to account for the romance of the place, though I believe there have been attic roofs visited by rain, squirrels and acorns which sheltered no romantic philosophy. And so one is forced to the conclusion that the peace and content, the philosophy and fancies

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that lurk there are individual matters, and that indeed all indoor philosophies are individual matters. But whatever be the reason for these mental curios I only know that here in this suburban attic peace laps one round with a greater air of security than in any other spot. One may sleep in any of its corners and weep in them too, one may gaze at the stars through tiny casement windows and try on one's new hats before blurred cast-off mirrors.

Ah, yes! the mirrors are the only things that will not yield to the spell of the place, and in spite of their blurredness they will insist upon pinning you down to plain facts and figures. But while you are making this admission to yourself and are staring at the antiquated reflection in the glass the dear old philosophy of the place will step out of some imaginary chest to assure you that the new hat is not a bit too juvenile for your face, for the face is but the index of the soul and souls have no age, while beauty is only in the eye of the beholder.

And then there are those pictured faces of dead and gone geniuses gazing at you from crude shelves and "sealed" walls, and assuring you that they, at least care, not for your years. There is Madame Modjeski

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to recall immortal youth as expressed in her Juliets and Rosalinds, Mrs. Browning shaking her curls at you and declaring that after all it is quite possible for moss roses to bud and bloom in the snow, and Keats, to assure you that all you need to know is that Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, and Matthew Arnold looking out of a cheap frame and shedding a "sweet reasonableness" over everything you do.

Oh, yes! when I want to be in the company of the immortals, immortal truths and undying philosophies, I climb my attic stairs, open the imaginary chests, and take my full of inherited spiritual treasures.

Those Little Court House Bells

THERE are not so many Chicagoans whose memories are illumined by the blaze of the Great Fire, and we find it the better part of discretion not to mention this event in general conversation with those we regard as our contemporaries. For in this matter it almost seems as if we had no contemporaries, that we stood alone on the burning deck of the Chicago ship, and that all the other passengers were yet to be born. For any allusion to this tragedy only meets with the response: "Oh, that was before my time, but I remember of hearing my grandfather talk about it."

Well, we like to talk about it, sometimes of an evening, and while sitting before our own fire we venture to rake the ashes of this memorable blaze. Paul is a South side boy, madly driving a distracted father down town to a scene of desolation and ruin, and afterwards helping him to stake out a small portion of the lake front, where the business of selling dried fruits might be resumed. And I am a small West side child awakened

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in the night by the sound of voices in the street and the cry: "The Court House is on fire!" Dimly, I was aware that all of the parental savings were invested in a row of buildings near the Court House, and so I found it not surprising that this midnight cry was followed by some confusion in the front bed-room, and later by the soft closing of the door.

Yes, the Court House burned, as did the row of buildings, but the Court House bell was fireproof and later it was made up into a million tiny bells that tinkled on chains about the necks of very early Chicagoans. The memory of the after horrors, the deprivations and sufferings are almost forgotten, but I can still see those precious bells and hear their musical tinkles.

And it is to the sound of these bells that we revive our memories and thus question each other:

"Do you remember," asks Paul, "those lucky people who were obliged to live in their vaults, life cliff-dwellers, because they could find no other shelter, and the wonderful melted specimens that lay all about them? Why we boys used to walk down town with grape baskets on our arms and

Those Little Court House Bells

come back so heavily loaded that we could hardly reach our own doors."

And true to my housekeeper's instinct I interrupt: "And the cups and saucers, all melted and run together, do you remember them?"

"Don't I? and the melted nails, didn't you gather all these relics into a beautiful pile to serve as an ornament to the front yard?"

Alas! no such relics were allowed to grace the front yard of the little West side cottage to which we moved; such reminders of the wreck of a hard-won competency were not to be tolerated, and I shall never forget my grief over this decree, while even now I envy Paul his remembered relics.

And then he thus muses: "Isn't it strange that those horrible old specimens and relics should have made a deeper impression on our childish memories than the actual sufferings and miseries of the time?"

"Yes," I answer, "I didn't much care about the burning of the Court House, but how eager I was to possess one of those little bells, but I suppose that is because material objects play so much more important a part in children's lives than

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abstract miseries. Yet perhaps the reason that I so loved those bells was because their cheerful tinkle seemed to ring out the old Chicago and ring in the new, and I recognized their symbolic value."

"Perhaps," said Paul, as he poked about among the ashes of our real fire.

Other Library Tables

F the fireplace is, as some one has said, the soul of a house, then the library table may be said to be its spirit. At least there is no piece of furniture in a home that will so surely reveal the character of the inmates, and none which is more intimate or personal. The pictures on the walls, the ornaments and hangings may represent an outgrown taste, a bye-gone fancy, but that motley assemblage of books and magazines that are found on a library table is almost sure to express the latest interests and aspirations of the inmates.

Of course, one doesn't refer to those museums of literary immortals sometimes found enclosed within decorative book-ends, and which seem to have been put there with no other purpose than to impress a visitor with the owner's fine taste in things intellectual. Of this goodly company is 'Emerson's Essays,' First and Second Series, "Little Journeys to the Homes of the Great," "Sesame and Lilies," and "Over the Tea-Cups." Not that any

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one of these volumes is unworthy of a permanent resting place on library tables, and not that they may not have been placed there to offer a needed stimulus in dull hours, but somehow one can always tell by the expression on their covers whether they represent a deference to accepted public taste, or are the beloved companions of their owners.

And what a debt of gratitude do we owe to other people's library tables, and how often have they been the means of contributing not a little to both our education and our entertainment. It is one of the most delightful of the spirit's adventures to come unexpectedly upon some refreshing piece of literature on the table of a friend, and to lose one's self in it while the hostess makes ready to join her guest. Memory recalls many agreeable acquaintances made in this way. *Don Quixote* first introduced himself to me from such a position and so did '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*,' and '*Daniel Deronda*.' On a memorable occasion '*The Idiot*' held me spell bound in the chair of a stranger, and '*Diana of the Crossways*' and '*Rhoda Fleming*' caused me to be grateful to both their creator and their collector.

Other Library Tables

And then what delightful renewals of old acquaintances one sometimes enjoys at other tables. You may venture to be patronizing when you see some of your old literary idols evidently giving present delight to a later reader. "I see you are reading '*Henry Esmond*,'" you remark casually to your hostess, "remarkable novel, isn't it?" But your friend hastens to assure you that of course she read the book years ago, and that now she merely wished to look up a certain scene, or to recall a famous interview.

But you are glad that she has given you this opportunity to revive your own youth, and you are grateful for these meetings with old loves. And perhaps some child in the house you visit happens to be reading '*David Copperfield*' for the first time, if children of to-day do read *David Copperfield*, and you are pleased to be once more informed that: "I was born on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike and I began to cry simultaneously."

Or you may be permitted an entrance into dear old "*Vanity Fair*," and to fall again under the spell of those opening lines: "While the present century was in its

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teens, and on one sunshiny morning in June, there drove up to the great iron gate of Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, a large family coach." You know perfectly well who is to enter that coach and what is to be the destiny of the occupants, but you relinquish the book with a sigh when your hostess appears, and you ask yourself whether you would not rather be left alone with Becky and Amelia than to meet, in the flesh, the most charming of hostesses.

Beethoven In The Rain



Of course, from the point of view of the managers of this summer garden it was unfortunate that it should begin to rain just before concert time, and from the musicians' standpoint no doubt it was discouraging, and even depressing, to play to forty people and more than forty times that number of empty seats. But if you happened to be one of these weather-proof music lovers, and was seated in a front seat that shut out the other thirty-nine listeners and gave you an unobstructed view of the musicians and their leader, then indeed you might feel yourself the favored of the gods, one of the forty immortals.

At least this is the way I felt this August afternoon as I gazed contentedly from my snug seat in the third row, at the rain which was increasing to a torrent, and which seemed to shut out the rest of the world. And when the leader took his place, and the orchestra played the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony one could not but feel that it would be well

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never to go back to the trivial round of daily life, but pass quietly out of existence to the sound of the rain, and the Fifth Symphony.

The storm grew worse, bending to the ground the golden-glow and pink phlox that bloomed in a bed just outside the pavilion. Darkness fell upon the group of listeners, a darkness that seemed the more intense for the electric lights that illumined the stage and the faces of the musicians.

During the brief interval between the playing of the Adagio and the Allegro a deaf old gentleman, accompanied by a pretty young girl, moved to the front row, and he was heard to say in a loud voice to his companion: "Can't understand music? You don't have to understand it, nobody understands it, you have simply to feel it." The old gentleman was certainly living up to this requirement, and so, it appeared, was every member of this still and absorbed audience.

The storm had not abated when the time came for the intermission, and few of the listeners ventured to leave their seats. The deaf old gentleman was explaining the different instruments to the pretty girl, and after listening to him for a time I wandered

Beethoven in the Rain

to the back of the pavilion, pausing on my way to greet a sweet-faced old lady with her head wrapped in a gray chiffon scarf.

"You here on such a day?" I ventured to remark.

"Oh, yes, I was obliged to come," she said with a charming smile, "for you see that symphony was played for me. I wrote to the conductor, some time ago, requesting that the orchestra play this glorious work, and explaining that it had always been my favorite composition, for it is, although I love everything the composer wrote. When I was a girl," she went on, giving a twist to the gray scarf, "I used to ask everyone I was introduced to if they liked Beethoven and if they said no, why I just didn't seem to want to have anything more to do with them."

"How proud and happy you must have been while the orchestra was playing," I exclaimed.

"Yes, indeed," she replied, "You see I didn't get any answer to my request for several days, and I had decided that the conductor was too busy to give it any attention and so had made my reservations for a Western trip. But when the note came this morning, and such a nice note

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it was, and I was assured that I might hear the whole Symphony to-day, I simply threw up all my plans, cancelled my reservation—and put on my rain coat."

"And do you feel repaid?" I demanded.

"Repaid!" she echoed, "why I lived the best part of my life over again while the orchestra was playing. All of the happiest moments of my past came back to me, and the unhappy ones were forgotten. My dead loved ones seemed to be with me again, and we smiled at each other and were content not to speak but merely to listen to this noble music."

The words of the deaf old gentleman came back to me: "You don't have to understand music, you have simply to feel it," and it seemed to me that an old age that could be thrilled and aroused to sweet memories by the magic of music was an old age robbed of its terrors.

The Village House

F suburbs may be said to have souls, and there are those who would be unwilling to grant that they have, but I say, if they have, then a certain suburb that I know, and which is located not more than a thousand miles from the city is blessed in such a possession. And this soul takes the form of a modest little edifice called the "Village House." Of course there are many houses in this picturesque bit of suburban woods, but there is but one "Village House." And the houses of the village seem to be bound to the "Village House" by a kind of fraternal tie, and there is between them such a spirit of mutual co-operation and helpfulness as to make the larger house appear like a big brother, or perhaps we should say a watchful mother to the smaller structure.

Not that this 'Village House' is large or imposing, on the contrary, its charm lies in the smallness of its size, in its shrinking modesty of manner, and in the fact that its

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purpose and activities do not vaunt themselves from the bricks and mortar.

"And what is that little building?" a stranger guest who is passing will ask, and straightway will come the answer: "Oh, that's the 'Village House,' and there's a cake sale going on to-day, won't you come in and help pay for our decorations by buying your dessert for dinner?" And though the guest is but just off the train she has been here long enough to catch the unique spirit of the place, and in she goes shining with benevolent intentions, and out she comes laden with buns and beans, jellies and jams, cakes and candies, or whatever may have appealed to her gastronomical fancy from the large collection of edibles gathered from private pantries and contributed by generous housewives. For all of the inhabitants of this little suburb take a personal and intimate interest in the "Village House," an interest that comes from having taken a hand in its decorations, in the making of its curtains, the filling of its library shelves, the arrangement of the flowers in its vases.

Once when a large sum was needed for some necessary changes in this little build-

The Village House

ing the villagers came forward and pledged themselves not only to raise the required sum but to earn it. Most of those interested agreed to contribute a specified amount and to raise this amount by personal effort. All of the talents hidden under napkins now came to light, and all the lights concealed under bushels were permitted full shining. If you wanted your shopping done for you, or your doughnuts made for you, or your bureau drawers put in order for you, there was some one who could do these things. Fair ladies peddled vegetables at your doors, and fine gentlemen sold fly-swatters on the streets. At night talented troubadours serenaded under your windows, and by day noted painters sat in your garden and painted you a picture that would have been an ornament to any public gallery. Of course, the money was raised and there was one memorable evening when the "Village House" echoed with the laughter aroused by the recital of these different methods of earning money.

But this soul of the suburb is not always a merry soul, sometimes it is a very serious one. For grave problems connected with the welfare of the plan, the laying out of its

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streets, the education of its children, the annihilation of its mosquitoes are brought up for discussion here, and hidden talents of oratory and declamation first come to light within its walls. And on the occasions of those serious meetings the place may be converted into the coziness of a home living room with open fire and evening lamp, or it may be made to present the more formal appearance of a public assembly-room.

When as a "restless analyst," Henry James returned to New England for revived impressions of the American scene he found that the New England village lacked two features that made for the charm of the villages of Old England. These were the Parson and the Squire and every novel reader knows how important a part these personages play in English fiction.

But in the suburb of which I write many of the men can at a moment's notice play the part of either Parson or Squire, and if there are grievances to be aired they are always ready to assist at the airing. And as for the Lady Bountifuls they flock in large numbers to this suburban centre and there distribute their bounties or cheer on

The Village House

the citizen who is acting as Preacher or Squire. And as this "Village House" is the recognized soul of the place, Parson, Squire, and Lady Bountifuls are each and all interested in its preservation.

Twenty-Five Bouquets

DEMANDED our telephone, early one August morning: "Would you be willing to make up twenty-five bouquets to present to the poor city mothers at the picnic to be given to them to-day, on the lawn in front of the Village House?" Of course I would, for what more congenial task for a flower-lover than to gather in from her neighbors' gardens and her own the forms of beauty that might move away the pall from dark spirits. Who could tell into what dingy corners these offerings might shed their charms, or into what dull lives they might bring memories of more flowery existence.

Twenty - Five bouquets! Why that meant twenty - five gifts of happiness to dull-eyed, care-ridden souls, and indeed there might be fifty souls who would come under the influence of these flowers, for were there not waiting ones at home thirsting for news of the picnic and ready to be thrilled by the smallest of its festivities.

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And so I, the bouquet-maker, went blithely and sentimentally to my task and found great pleasure in bringing together floral affinities, and in keeping apart those that were never meant to be joined together in a bouquet. But at about the seventh bouquet my flowery sentimentality seemed to droop, and I began to glance with impatience at the pail-full of gay blossoms. 'Even flowers may become tiresome, if one has too much of them,' I said to myself, 'and really these flaunting marigolds get on my nerves. No wonder that William Morris likened certain double garden flowers to lumps of cut paper; I think I'll go out and gather some of the wild things that grow by the roadside.'

Ah yes, these uncultivated blossoms have a beauty and charm all their own; they are more rugged than the cultivated blossoms and do not wither so quickly within doors. After all it seems hardly worth while to cultivate a garden when such lovely results may be obtained without this labor. But is it likely that these poor mothers of large families will care about any of these blossoms? Wouldn't they rather take home some pieces of cake, or left-over sandwiches? And flowers fade so quickly; no

Twenty-Five Bouquets

doubt before they reach the tenement quarters these blossoms will have gone the way of both the wild and the cultivated, and be fit only for the dump heap.

Who would have believed that it would take so long to arrange twenty-five bouquets, and who would think that the face of a daisy could ever betray so much weariness? And what messy things flowers are, to be sure, really it makes one sad to look upon so many broken-necked zinnias and petalless cosmos.

Well, the bouquets are finished at last and when arranged in a large gathering basket they make quite a gay and imposing appearance, and do indeed seem like so many shapes of beauty designed to lift the pall from dark spirits. So I'm off for the dark spirits.

They were there on the lawn surrounding the Village House awaiting a second installment of sandwiches, and perhaps the fourth or fifth cup of coffee. All had partaken of coffee, children as well as grown people, babes in arms and youngsters just learning to toddle. But before presenting the bouquets they must be given a short ride around the country. Five of the picnickers fell to my share, and did I ever

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act as chauffeur to a more appreciative five?

"My but this is swell air," declared an eighteen-year old mother with a two-months baby in her arms, and her own mother, a youngish looking Italian woman nodded her head in ecstacy, and chattered in Italian to her two smaller children who were awed into silence by the double wonders of riding and gazing at real country.

The young wife grew confidential as we drove. Before her marriage, a little over a year ago, her husband had been a traveler, a very great traveler, one who never stopped in one place longer than was necessary to pick up a little change by splitting wood or cutting grass. But now he was a steady driver of a wagon and brought to her his three-dollars-a-day wages at the end of each week. "But of course," she said, "it's up to me to give him two dollars once in a while to have a good time with."

As we rode rapidly through the country we created a slight breeze on this hot August day, and the pink chiffon waist worn by the mother of the girl-wife fluttered in the wind. The woman touched this garment affectionately and said something to her daughter in Italian. "She says," de-

Twenty-Five Bouquets

clared the girl, translating for my benefit, "that when she has seen women driving she has often admired the way in which their waists blew in the breeze, and now her waist is blowing just as theirs did."

And then later came the bouquets. What were rides and coffee compared to flowers! Could Joey have a bunch? and Mina? and Margherita? and could they take one home to a sick sister? Oh, yes, they were happy over the flowers, but then they had been happy before the flowers came, they were always happy. Even the jaded mother in a green net waist with an imbecile boy at her knee, and an infant in her arms who looked as mindless as his brother, she was happy, and the mother of the child who screamed perpetually, and the one who had twins with her, and heaven knows how many at home were all happy. In fact there seemed to be no dark spirits among them, and as I listened to their cheerful talk and laughter, and remembered the delight of my fellow-riders I said to myself, after all I am the one who has received the twenty-five bouquets, twenty-five bouquets of the uncultured blossoms.

The Great Adventure

THEY were sitting together over their knitting, these women of elegant and intellectual leisure, and dropping silently into a vacant porch rocker I caught the threads of their conversation and learned that they were discussing a recent sea disaster. They expressed their admiration of the way in which many of the victims of this calamity met death, and wondered what they would have done in a similar situation.

"I'm sure I should have been a craven coward," declared a knitter of a large gray sock, "and have spent my last moments in undignified wailings and denouncing of fate."

"Do you really think it was fate?" questioned a frail looking knitter of a stout sweater, "do you believe, as Emerson has said, that each soul contains from the beginning the event that shall befall it?"

"How awful," exclaimed another knitter, "and who reads Emerson these days?"

"I think it would be better if we all read him more," said the Frail One, "he might

From Day to Day

help us to understand some of these present horrors, and fortify us to meet them."

"I shall never forget," remarked the hostess, as she fumbled about in her knitting bag for some lost treasure, "the way in which that theatrical manager, I have forgotten his name, met his fate on this ship, saying, just before the boat went down that one should not fear death, for after all it was the great adventure."

"And there is no evil in life for him who realizes that death itself is no evil," quoted the Frail Knitter, "at least that is what Montaigne says, "and I have often felt as the theatrical manager did, for our earthly adventures are so terribly handicapped by the physical, and what Pater calls this painful ministry to the flesh has stood so much in the way of our terrestrial happiness, that it is a positive joy to remember that with the adventure of dissolution these 'angry stains of life and action' will be removed, and our spirits may soar untrammeled."

"And where will they soar to?" demanded the Knitter of the Gray Sock.

"That's too big a question for me," protested the Frail One, "perhaps they will soar only as far as the 'great store-house of

The Great Adventure

being' as Matthew Arnold calls it, and there await another incarnation."

"And more physical handicaps?" questioned the Knitter of the Gray Sock, "it seems to me that this would not be much of an adventure, and can anyone tell me what Arnold meant by 'a store-house of being?'"

No one seemed to know, but another voice was heard in quotation, "Well you know what George Meredith has said: that there is nothing the body suffers but what the soul may profit by."

"Now isn't that absurd?" declared the Knitter of the Gray Sock, "as if our souls were not entirely submerged by our physical woes. I know that I for one am never so hateful and disagreeable as when I'm ill. I hate sickness—and old age, that's another of my horrors."

"Oh there's no old age now," said the hostess, rising with some evident hospitable intent, "except among the very young; who was it that said we are oldest when we are born?"

"I don't know," admitted the literary Frail One, "but I know that Compton Leith has said that for those who have experienced joy and really know the meaning of life there shall be no sadness of surrender,

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but that the ecstacy of endeavor shall be prolonged to the end. The tree of life, he says, shall not rust to dull hues, but flush to a swift splendour—I have forgotten the rest."

"Well that's too much for me," admitted the Knitter of the Gray Sock, "but I suppose that is the way it was with that theatrical manager, his life certainly flushed to a swift splendour. But really ladies, I feel like saying what Thoreau did to the minister who came in his last illness to talk to him about another life: 'one world at a time.' Let us take old age and death when they come, and in the meantime stick to our knitting."

"Then you will not be sorry that tea has arrived," said the hostess as she helped a maid steer a tea-wagon into the midst of this little group.

"Tea!" exclaimed the Frail One under her breath to the knitter of the Gray Sock, "it's always tea."

"Yes," was the answer, "tea is a part of the earthly adventure."





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